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ARGENTINE REPUBLIC.

SANITARY CHARACTER

OF

ANDINE HEIGHTS.



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LONDON :

WATERLOW & SONS, PRINTERS, CARPENTERS' HALL,
LONDON WALL.

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We have made the following extracts from an article published in the "Revista de Buenos Ayres," on the climates of the Andine Heights, and mountains of Cordova, written by Dr. Scrivener, who has himself resided for many years in those countries.

The "Revista de Buenos Ayres" is a most valuable publication, and those who are interested in South America will find much reliable information in it. It contains many curious articles on the history and literature of the country. It has now reached its 13th volume, each book containing 640 pages, 8vo.

*Extracts from an Article on the Climates of the Andine
Mountains, and also those of the Province of Cordova.*

The sky at the Andine Mountains is pure azure, and the atmosphere bright and clear, and is so very transparent that it enables you to see objects at a distance, making them apparently close at hand, although in reality it would require a journey of several days to reach them.

The climate is fine and healthy, the lightness of the atmosphere produces an exhilarating effect, and an increase of energy and activity. The grandeur and magnificence of

the mountains fill the mind with sentiments of veneration and awe.

I have traversed these mountains on many occasions, and am therefore enabled to form an opinion of the salubrity of the climate, as also of that on the route from the province of Cordova to the banks of the Pacific. All over this vast tract of land, that fatal enemy of man, the tubercular phthisis, so justly feared by the inhabitants of Lima, and Buenos Ayres, is entirely unknown.

During a residence of nearly ten years in different and widely spread districts of the whole country, I never saw nor heard, either directly or indirectly, through my intercourse with others, of the existence of that disease.

Doctor Smith remarks,* “that incipient tubercular phthisis, usually attended with more or less hemoptisis, is one of the most common pulmonary affections known in Lima and other parts of the coast of Peru.

“Besides, it is a disease almost certainly cured if taken in time, by removing the *coast* patient to the open inland valley of Jauja, which runs from ten to eleven thousand feet above the sea level.

“This fact has been known and acted on from time immemorial by the native inhabitants and physicians, and I have,” observes that physician, “sent patients from the capital to Jauja, in a very advanced state of phthisis, with open ulcerations and well marked caverns on the lungs, and have seen them again after a lapse of a little time, return to their homes free from fever, and with every appearance of the disease being arrested ; but in many instances it would, after a protracted residence on the coast, again become necessary to return to the mountains, to prevent a recurrence of the disease.”

* See “Climate of the Swiss Alps and of the Peruvian Andes compared.”

We thus learn from the preceding extract, that the influence of the atmosphere in the mountains of Peru will remove pulmonary consumption in its first stage, and arrest its progress when far advanced.

That such is the fact, I can also myself vouch from my own experience during a residence of 16 years in that country.

Dr. Jourdan remarks,* “that consumption is very rare in high elevations, which is not to be attributed to the latitude of the place, but to its elevation; that Mexico and Puebla, which are almost free from this disease, are in the same latitude as Vera Cruz, where it prevails; and that the condition of the patient who suffers from consumption, is considerably relieved in elevated districts, which he attributes to a less amount of oxygen in the rarified air.”

From these facts we can assert with safety, that those who unfortunately suffer from incipient tubercular phthisis, will almost with certainty obtain a cure in the mountainous districts which extend at a higher or lower elevation from the province of Cordova to the valley of Rimac, whilst, on the other hand, those in the later stages of that malady will find it will be arrested, and that their lives may be prolonged for years.

It becomes a matter for most serious consideration, whether it would not be well for patients suffering from pulmonary complaints to seek the renovation of their health in these salubrious regions, in preference to the Island of Madeira, Italy, and the South of France, where these diseases are known to originate, and where hundreds have gone without obtaining any advantages, and many with positively evil results.

“There is something,” says Mr. Burkhardt,† “like the sound of a death-knell in the physician’s mandate sending

* See “*Les Altitudes de l’Amerique Tropical au-dessus le niveau des mers au point de vue de la constitution medicale.*”

† See “*Syria and the Holy Land.*”

the sick patient to those places and scenes where so many fellow-sufferers have preceded him, in vain search for health, and found—a grave.”

The invalid will not find this in these healthy districts. In the mountains of Cordova, as well as on the Andine Heights, the patient will find his disease alleviated, and in time removed, (let him come from what quarter of the globe he may) by the hand of Nature. There pulmonary complaints are never known to originate, and there those who suffer from it, on the borders of the Parana and the river Plate, seek, and find a permanent cure for their ailments proceeding from all affections of the lungs. “He will not have before his imagination the phantoms of numberless victims, his predecessors in the same hopeless career, to cast the shadow of death upon a being already depressed in mind by disease and loneliness, and pining after the familiar sights and sounds he may perhaps never meet again.” There on the contrary, he will be in the midst of all that is grand—a thousand magnificent objects will excite his attention, and divert his mind from his unhappy malady, on which he will not dwell, but, on the contrary, on well founded hopes of a perfect recovery and a speedy return to his family and friends.

We believe, that when the benefits to be derived from a residence in the climate of these mountains are more generally known in Europe, very many who suffer from pulmonary complaints will visit these regions, for a renovation of their health and system.

We would recommend the mountains of Cordova to consumptive patients, in preference to the Andine Heights of Bolivia, as being the nearest to the river Plate, and containing a greater variety of objects to divert the attention and amuse. The facility of transport, the shortness of the passage, combined with a well founded hope of renovating the

health, will be of themselves sufficient reasons for undertaking the journey.

The passage from England can be made in 34 days. There are several lines of merchant steamers, from London and Liverpool, as well as the Government vessels from Southampton and Bordeaux, which arrive at Buenos Ayres every month. From this port you can embark in a steamer for the city of Rosario, which is most beautifully situated on the banks of the river Parana, and is the finest port in the Argentine Confederation, at which you arrive in about 26 hours.

From thence you take the Argentine Central Railway, and arrive at the city of Cordova on the same day.

Here commence the serraicias or mountainous districts, which extend to the valley of Rimac, comprising an area of about a thousand leagues.

We believe that at no very distant time, a public establishment will be founded in the mountains of Cordova for consumptive patients; should this be the case, we can vouch that there would be no lack of visitors willing to support the establishment, and anxious to aid it by their means, in exchange for the benefits they have received there; the natural grandeur and magnificence of the mountain scenery would also contribute, in no small degree, to the attractions of the place, and the benefit of the invalids.

The city of Cordova is situated in a deep valley on the banks of a river, amidst the most beautiful and varied scenery.

Ascending from the city to the mountains, the traveller finds every variety of climate, with a difference of temperature at every additional ascent.

In these varieties of temperature, he will be certain to find one that is suitable to his complaint, and agreeable to himself.

The tops and sides of the mountains are partly covered

with trees and shrubs, and the soil in the valleys is rich and very fertile, producing Indian corn, wheat, barley, sundry fruits and vegetables, and whatever the husbandman may desire to cultivate. Cattle, horses, mules, with sheep and goats, roam in large herds, on most excellent pasture. Huanacos and other wild animals inhabit the mountains. The wool of the sheep is of a superior quality and highly prized in the European markets.

There are great varieties of trees on the plains, many of which are very lofty, and their branches form an agreeable shade, as well as add to the beauty of the scenery. The timber of these trees is of superior quality, well suited for the construction of houses, and in the manufacture of furniture, &c.

There are mines of gold, silver, copper and iron ; the latter is very abundant and of good quality ; there are also marble quarries, and the marble is very fine and of different colours ; limestone of an extremely white nature is abundant : in short, there are few spots in the world where nature has lavished such a variety of animals, vegetables, and mineral productions as the province of Cordova.

It must follow, that with all these natural advantages, a country producing every commodity for the subsistence of man, and capable of affording all that tends to the convenience and luxury of life, will become at no distant period the abode of a numerous, industrious and wealthy population.

For a long period the Jesuits held their head quarters in this province, and they were remarkable for their tact and knowledge in selecting the most healthy and fertile spots for their residences.

They erected in the capital the finest churches in the Argentine Confederation ; they acquired large possessions throughout the province, and they also built splendid country mansions, which are models of art, taste and convenience.

The fine edifices at Santa Catalina, Jesus Maria, and Caraga, are much visited and greatly admired by strangers.

It has been truly remarked by an eminent writer, that the greatest wonder of the age is a locomotive engine ; that since its adoption travellers have been multiplied through the facility of transit ; and that the greater those facilities, the greater the number of travellers. These facts have become generally known in this Republic, where several railways have already been made, and others are being constructed. The Central Argentine Railway, when completed, will extend from the city of Rosario to Cordova ; this will be a great and lasting benefit to the commerce of the country. Cordova is now the grand emporium of the inland provinces ; their productions of hides, wool, cotton, indigo, sugar, wine, wheat, tobacco, skins of animals, gold, silver, copper, iron and other valuable productions, are transported thither and conveyed by rail to the port of Rosario and shipped for Buenos Ayres, or direct to Europe. This railway extends 248 miles in length. Passengers have much increased since the opening of this line to Villanueva, and will still further increase on its completion to Cordova. In addition to men of business, many will avail themselves of it as a journey of pleasure, to visit the city and its beautiful mountain scenery.

Those who are fond of this kind of scenery will find much to please them. The mineralogist will see minerals, and the botanist plants, to attract their attention. We fully believe that before the lapse of many years, strangers from Buenos Ayres, and other provinces, will build cottages in these beautiful and healthy regions, which would only require taste in their erection, and judgment in selecting the sites, to render them all that can be imagined as beautiful and romantic.

